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The project described here is designed to measure the effectiveness of an intensive attempt at totally individualizing instruction to upgrade instructional programs in two elementary schools with the highest concentration of disadvantaged students in the county. The goal of the project is to achieve a system which will allow each student to progress at his own pace, teach him greater self-reliance and autonomy, provide him with a more conducive environment for enriching experiences, and aid him in developing a healthy self-concept. It is hoped that these aims will be achieved through multi-age grouping, team teaching, flexible scheduling, programed learning activities, and non-grading. (GO)

ED029507

PROJECT: Educational Improvement

A TITLE I ESEA PROJECT

Mesa County Valley School District 51

- Grand Junction -

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

BYRON W. HANSFORD, Commissioner

Denver - 1969

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Project: Educational Improvement

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COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

Project "Educational Improvement" is one of several exemplary Title I ESEA programs operating in Colorado's public school districts.

The Colorado Department of Education is pleased to present this informative booklet which reports one of several promising practices.

It is our hope that programs such as this will serve as models for school districts in developing innovative compensatory education activities for the educationally disadvantaged children in Colorado's public schools.

Byron W. Hansford
Commissioner of Education

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Project "Educational Improvement" represents a change of thrust in the Title I ESEA program in Mesa County Valley School District 51.

It is designed to develop exemplary instructional programs in the two elementary schools having the highest concentration of educationally disadvantaged children. They are Emerson and Riverside Elementary Schools.

This project is designed to measure the effectiveness of a saturation of services and ideas in a program of total individualization of instruction through:

- Multi-media approaches
- Multi-modes of learning
- Multi-age grouping of students
- Team teaching
- Flexible scheduling
- Locally programmed learning activities
- Para professionals
- Non-graded reporting
- Continuous progress

The facilities of the two project schools, the oldest in the district, provided as little atmosphere for modern learning experiences as the mind could conceive. However, the inexpensive remodeling demonstrated that an obsolete facility does not necessarily prohibit the implementation of innovative ideas in education.

The project is a combined effort between Mesa County Valley School District No. 51, the Colorado Department of Education, and Title I, ESEA.

PROJECT "EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT"

How it started . . . .

As part of a comprehensive educational planning program, in trying to meet the learning needs of the children, project "Educational Improvement" was conceived. A part of the overall plan was to cope with the district's diversified school population, and to project into the future what the needs of that population might be. The planners looked at trends in education, societal and community needs, as well as the needs of children. Their educational system was then reviewed in the light of this examination, and it was determined that modifications and changes were needed if Grand Junction was to meet the challenge of the future and responsibility for its children.

Through evaluation of present programs, consideration of programs outside the district, and consultation, it was decided that in order to meet the educational needs, instruction must be individualized. This decision raised several questions and much discussion immediately. For example, under what conditions could individualized instruction best be carried out? Discussion considered the status quo as well as certain historically developed educational concepts. One concept which had to be given strong consideration was that of "graded" classrooms. This type of organization was discarded as an inadequate learning environment for individualized instruction, and a new organizational concept was adopted. This concept holds that knowledge is something pupils seek for themselves under the guidance of competent teachers, and that open areas or instructional material in which children can use a variety of today's media are desirable. This allows for *independent stuay* through the use of *programmed materials* or *Learning Activity Packages* with direction from a competent team of teachers, rather than one teacher.

The theoretical base of project "Educational Improvement" has been the following generalizations about human learning: (1) Learning is Natural –A great deal of learning goes on in the absence of any attempt to promote it. (2) Learning is Cumulative–Traditional schooling was based on the maxim "practice makes perfect." Programmed instruction is based on the notion that new bits of learning are serially integrated with existing bits. (3) Learning is Unified--An individual cannot acquire new information without making it a part of his own personal world. (4) Learning is Selective–We select when we are identifying and recognizing new stimuli, when we are incorporating new information with previous learnings, and when we are remembering things we have learned at an earlier time. (5) Learning is Individual–Although a child is always learning, he may not be learning what his teacher supposes she is teaching, for a child learns in relation to his own peculiar complex of personal attributes, experiences, and learning patterns.

This philosophy, it is hoped, will bring about the accomplishment of the following objectives in all areas of curriculum.

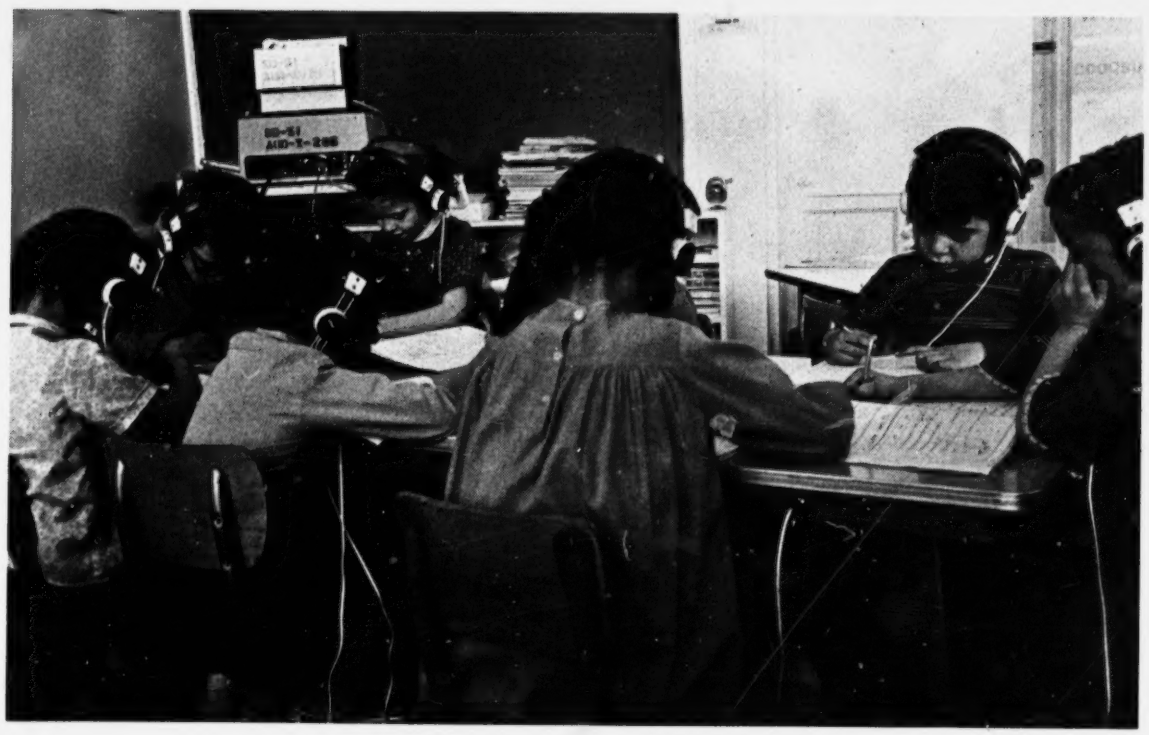
- To allow each student to progress at his own speed (pace)
- To provide an atmosphere which will stimulate greater interest in learning
- To teach children greater self-reliance and self-direction
- To develop the facility for independent problem solving
- To assist the student to accept greater responsibility for his own progress
- To provide a more conducive environment for enriching experiences
- To aid the student in developing a healthy self-concept

Individualized Instruction Through . . .

MULTI-MEDIA

Students are given an opportunity to learn through all their senses by using a variety of educational media: films, filmstrips, controlled readers, video-tape recordings, television, reference books and texts. Activities are planned to provide maximum utilization of various media.

Video-taped programs add new dimensions to students' educational experiences.



Students learn to discriminate—to select the best sources of information by properly utilizing equipment such as the Aud-machine.

MULTI-MODES OF LEARNING

Individualized instruction should provide not only a variety of media, but it should also provide the student with an option of methods and activities. If he cannot read from a book, he should be allowed to practice certain reading skills on a machine. If he cannot produce a written report, he should be allowed to report orally, using pictures, charts, or his own sense of drama.

For the child having difficulty expressing herself in reading or writing, charts and graphs provide a different method to demonstrate ability.

Many children fail to respond to traditional approaches for learning. Presenting new avenues of learning experiences such as viewing films or working in small groups allows for maximum individual development.

MULTI-AGE GROUPING

Multi-age grouping permits students of different ages to be grouped together, based on achievement. Under the supervision of teachers, children can work in small groups at their own pace on their own interests. Children learn from each other; they stimulate and challenge each other's thinking. As an older child explains something to a younger one, his understanding also increases. Cooperation, self-respect, and the development of the ability to accept more responsibility for their own learning through self-directed, small group instruction are positive goals to be achieved.

TEAM TEACHING

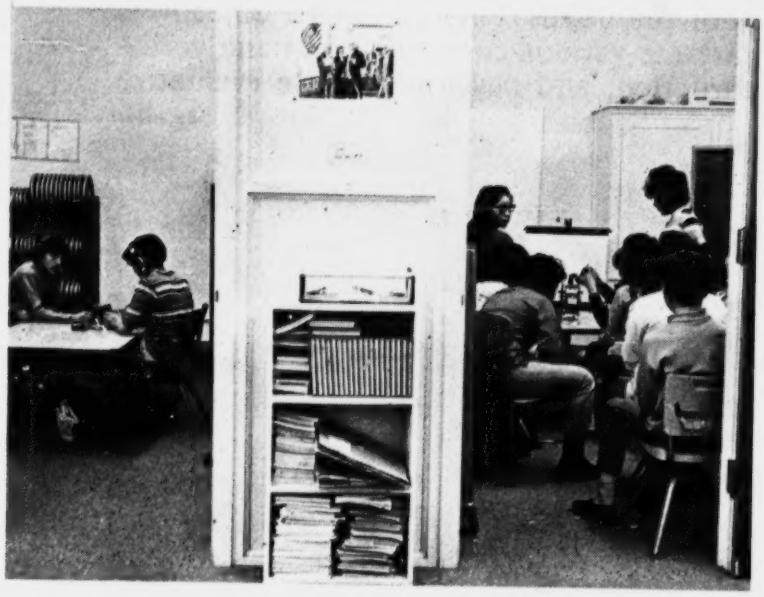
Team teaching facilitates the orientation of new teachers to the curriculum, provides a better sequence of planned learning activities for all students, creates greater cooperation among the staff and allows for greater flexibility in instruction.

Personnel of a teaching team constantly plan cooperatively, adapting the curriculum to the individual needs of the pupils. They formulate objectives, select appropriate content, correlate the various curricular areas and activities, assign responsibilities for instruction, and develop and use evaluative techniques.

The teaching team meets regularly to review problems, make changes in procedure, revise LAPs, analyze progress, and continue planning.

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING

Flexible scheduling is a necessary component of individualized instruction in order to provide for the individual learning styles of the students. Some students function best through self-directed activities, while others need much greater assistance and guidance from the teacher. Students must be given time and opportunities for varied activities.



Flexible scheduling allows different kinds of activities to be carried out simultaneously.

Children work on listening skills while others may be viewing a film or getting individual help from teacher or aide.

PROGRAMMED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The *LAPs,* or Learning Activity Packages, are programmed materials which include pre-tests, multi-media and multi-mode learning activities, student self-evaluation tools, and opportunities for re-cycling. Teacher evaluation instruments, including concepts and behavioral objectives, are prepared in the areas of Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, Health, Safety and Physical Education.*

A *LAP* is a unit of work through which each student may seek a greater amount of self-direction for his own learning. It encourages the student to do his best quality work at a pace and level equal to his ability, needs and interests. It further provides options to work with the type of resource materials most interesting and valuable to the student.

LAPs are prepared and administered by the whole staff working with children in the two target schools. The planning and preparation takes place during in-service education, summer workshops and during the regular school year.

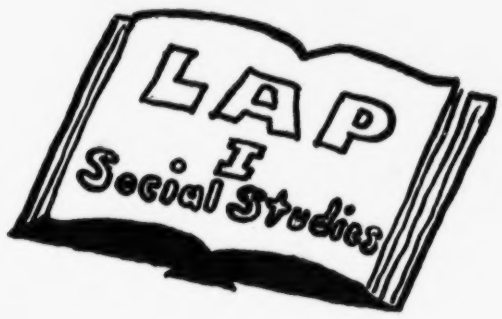
* Credit and acknowledgement is hereby given to the Nova Schools, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for the development of the original concept of LAPs.

The LAP...

This LAP provides a firm foundation upon which you may rest: a tray, a book, a child, or ????

This LAP provides the assurance of a continuity of flow and a joining of parts.

This LAP provides a means of quenching thirst.



This is the LAP with which we are concerned. It, too, provides:

A firm foundation for further learning experience, continuity of flow of learning, and is used to quench the thirst for knowledge.

TEACHER AIDES

In this program, teacher aides are non-degree people employed from the school community. Working under the supervision of the teachers they are employed for the following purposes:

- to handle non-instructional duties of the teacher such as recording grades and pupil attendance, collecting lunch monies and duplicating instructional materials.
- to provide a bridge between the student and teacher by giving the student a person from the community with whom he can more easily identify.
- to serve as proctors within the learning center, assist the student in gathering and using materials and equipment, help with lunchroom and playground supervision.
- to work with children in small groups and individually, assisting them in following instructions and completing assignments, reading stories or helping them operate machines.

NON-GRADING

Non-grading in this project is used in relation to reporting student progress in a manner other than an A, B, or C mark.

Since the student is allowed to progress in a sequential manner at his own rate and interest, he will not be expected to move from one Learning Activity Package to another until he has demonstrated satisfactory performance in skill development and understanding of concepts taught in the previous package. A certain range of packages is designated for each year of school and student progress is reported on the basis of his actual progress toward completion of the packages, depth of study, quantity and quality of work.

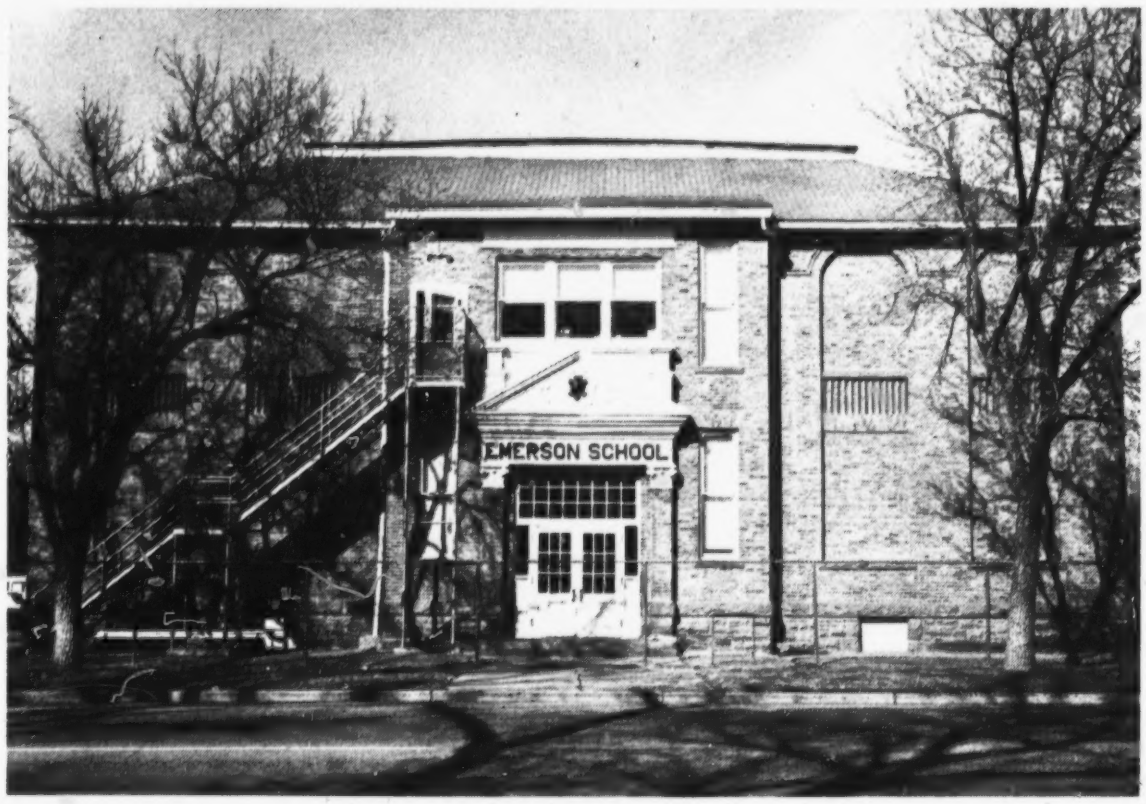
No child will be competing with another for a better grade. Individual progress or learning is the student's reward for time and effort.

SUMMARY

District 51 has taken a big step forward in attempting to bring about changes in instruction to better cope with the learning needs of children. The District has identified the needs of disadvantaged children concentrated in two schools and has devised a program which has best utilized Title I funds as well as the facilities at the two stated locations.

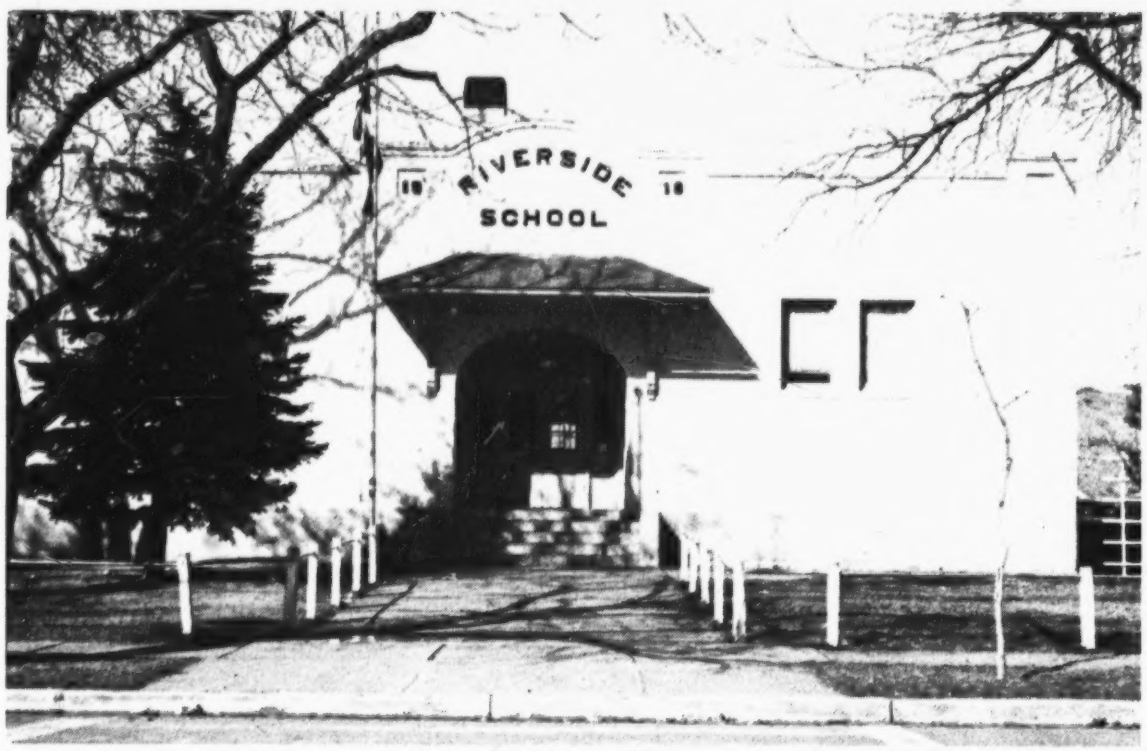
The concentration of services in the two schools with the highest percentage of low-income children is in line with the new Title I ESEA criteria. This concentration of effort should provide not only the base for evaluating individualized instruction, but also the base from which to develop future sound educational change.

All aspects of the program which prove to be particularly successful will be implemented in other schools throughout the District. Sound evaluation of the project will provide the base for revision and modification.



EMERSON SCHOOL

Built in 1902.
Serves 255 elementary students. Located in an older, lower socio-economic area. Children are predominately of Spanish ancestry.



RIVERSIDE SCHOOL

Built in 1918.
Serves 195, predominately Spanish-speaking children from a lower income area.